

REMARKS

Claims 1-15 were pending in this application when last examined. The Abstract has been amended. Claims 1-9, 11, 12 and 14-15 are currently amended. Claim 10 has been canceled.

Support for the amendments can be found in the specification and original claims as filed. Support for amended claim 1 can be found, for example, at page 6, lines 12-15. No new matter has been added.

DRAWINGS

At page 2, item 1, the Office Action objects to the drawings. The Office Action requires that the drawings show the features recited in claim 10. Claim 10 has been canceled, thus rendering the objection moot.

SPECIFICATION

At page 3, item 3, the Office Action objects to the Abstract. The amended Abstract addresses each of the issues noted in the Office Action. Accordingly, Applicants request reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection.

CLAIM OBJECTIONS

At page 3, items 4-10, the Office Action objects to claim 1 because of informalities. The currently amended claims address each of the issues noted in the objection. Accordingly,

Applicants request reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection.

CLAIM REJECTIONS - 35 USC § 112

At page 5, item 12, the Office rejects claim 14 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

The Office Action contends that "standard non-modified components" is indefinite. One of ordinary skill in the art would understand "a standard pipe coupling without modifications" as described in the specification at page 2, lines 3-6. This portion of the specification describes a known locking device disclosed in US 6293595. The specification further describes a locking device entirely compatible with the standard pipe couplings without requiring modifications. Thus, one of ordinary skill in the art would understand the scope of claim 14. Claim 14 satisfies the requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. Accordingly, Applicants request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection.

CLAIM REJECTIONS - 35 USC § 102

At page 5, item 14, the Office Action rejects claims 1-15 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by MARC et al. (US 5,851,035). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Claim 1 is directed to a locking device for a screw coupling. The locking device is especially adapted to cooperate with a screw coupling that includes first and second components rotatable in relation to one another during screwing and unscrewing, the first component comprising a first thread and a rotating engagement formation distant from the first thread. The locking device is mounted on the second component of the screw coupling.

Claim 1 more specifically is directed to a locking device that includes a coupling component for coupling with the engagement formation, a stop component connected for common rotation with a body carried by the second component, the body connected for common rotation with the second component, and disconnectable coupling means between the coupling component and the stop component. In addition, the disconnectable coupling means comprises a ratchet allowing relative rotation in the direction of unscrewing when a torque at least indirectly applied to the coupling component and the stop component with respect to one another overcomes a predetermined elastic resistance, the torque between the coupling component and the stop component resulting from a torque applied between the first component and the body.

As described in the specification, the first component (2) is coupled in rotation with the coupling component (42),

whereas the second component (4) (nut) is coupled in rotation with the stop component (38).

By comparison, in the device of MARC, the support member (3) coupling with the first component (1) should be considered as equivalent to the presently claimed coupling component (42), and the locking member (4) coupling with the second component (2) (nut) corresponds to the presently claimed stop component (38).

In MARC, the coupling component 3 is fixed against the first component, for example by soldering (see, col. 4, lines 37-40). In contrast, in the present device, the stop component (38) is pushed toward the coupling component (42) by means of a spring (36). The coupling component (42) engages the engagement formation (11) for coupling. Also, MARC discloses a component that is permanently fixed on the first component by screw coupling. In contrast, in present claim 1, the locking device does not involve any modification of the components of the screw coupling.

In present claim 1, the body (18) is carried by the second component (4) (nut) and the body is connected for common rotation with the second component. In distinction, MARC does not teach or suggest any body carried by the second component (nut).

In the present device, the body is fitted around the hexagonal formation of the nut (4) (see, for example, page 4, lines 1-3). The nut and the body are connected for common

rotation. Also, the body has retaining means for axially attaching the body to the nut (see, for example, page 4, lines 7-10). This allows any modification of the components of the screw coupling.

The functioning of the present locking device, i.e. the screwing or unscrewing, features that a torque is applied between the first component and the body. In contrast, in MARC, the torque is applied to the first component relative to the second component.

In view of the amendments and the above remarks, MARC fails to teach or suggest, and does not anticipate a locking device having the combination of features as recited in present claim 1, and claims 2-9, and 11-15 dependent thereon. Accordingly, Applicants request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection.

CONCLUSION

Entry of the above amendments is earnestly solicited. Applicant respectfully requests that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

Should there be any matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future submissions, to charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 25-0120 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17.

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HJV/jr

APPENDIX:

The Appendix includes the following item(s):

- ☒ - an amended Abstract of the Disclosure